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A Critical Appraisal of Three Modern Christian Movements from the Standpoint of Their Possible Contribution to the Work of Liberal Christian Education

By

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B.A. Pomona College 1925

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

A. First Contact with the Three Movements

These three modern Christian movements have fascinated me ever since I first came in contact with them. My interest has grown throughout the years. I am convinced that each one of them has a definite contribution to make to liberal Christian education. My privilege is to share with you what I have found, that you, too, might realize what the modern liberal church may gain from these three movements. In a very natural way I made my first contacts with each of these religious groups.

My grandmother, who had been a semi-invalid all the early years of my life, and who had been critically ill for several months was given up to die by the medical doctors and osteopaths. Finally, one of them suggested Christian Science as the only possible way back to any health whatsoever. This suggestion was accepted and my grandmother was rapidly healed so that she suffered no longer. The last months of her life were spent in health and joy. She passed away peacefully at an advanced age. This experience made a very deep impression upon me and my interest has grown with the passing years.

When I was a Junior in College, I was warned by a professor not to waste any time at Angelus Temple which had been recently opened in Los Angeles. This aroused my curiosity.

Three years later I had an opportunity to visit a Divine Healing service. (I had grown up in a very liberal church.) This was all new and strange to me. But the sincerity of people fascinated me. During the next three years I went often to the Temple. I became convinced that Divine Healing was real and that the conversion experience certainly transformed many people. I watched the Sunday School, Training Institute, Radio Station, Commissary and Church grow by leaps and bounds. It was a miracle to me, because I knew the average member was not wealthy. I remained on the outside and marvelled. During this past summer I spent five weeks at the Temple making a special study of the Training School and Religious Education Department. The result of my experience is used as the background for part of this thesis.

In February 1933, there came to San Francisco the International Oxford Group Team to conduct a house-party at the Fairmont Hotel. Since I was interested in the religious field, I went over to attend some of the meetings. One day, at lunch, I met Mary Wilson of England. She told me very simply what it had meant to her. It surely intrigued me, because in it I saw the solution to my major life problem--how could I become vital in Christian work among young people? She had found the answer. I wanted it. On March 4, 1933, I surrendered my life unreservedly to Christ to be used in His Service as He willed. That was the biggest thing I had ever

...ce in my life, and it has brought me the highest pe...
...spiritually, intellectually and physically. Somehow my life
...as all straightened out, ...ngs became very real to me, ...
...ible became a living book, God became my guide, Christ
...became my closest friend. My spiritual eyes were opened and
I realized the darkness I had been walking in. My life began
...to come true. At last, I had something to give to others
...which would solve their life problems, too. My lips were un-
...loosed. My one desire was to tell others. I discovered that
...testifying was the natural result of a vital conversion ex-
...perience. Indeed, I had become a new creature.

With this conversion experience came the realization that I now had something in common with Pentecostalism and Christian Science. Although I could not accept many of their doctrines, I felt as one with them. I decided that they had much to offer me. With this in mind, I began to study them. The result of this challenge you will find in the following pages of this thesis.

B. Definitions of Important Terms

...explain of the terms found in the statement of my thesis. By "movement" I mean an organized group, "either the doctrines of Christianity, which aims to enlighten or convert, or both. ...life of Christians."[1] In "Christian Education" ...

[1] ...n me by Dr. John T. Faulkner.

include all the educational activities of a Christian Church. By "critical appraisal" I mean an evaluation resulting from careful judgment.

Chapter 1

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

A. Brief History of the Movement

1. Mary Baker Eddy

Mary Baker (Glover Patterson) Eddy was born July 16, 1821 at Bow, New Hampshire. She was the youngest of six children. Her father was Mark Baker, a landowner and a justice of the peace. He played an active part in both the public schools and the Congregational Church. To his daughter, Mary, he gave a loathing for sin while her mother gave to her a sense of the healing power of divine Love. Although she was interrupted greatly by ill-health, she received a liberal education for a woman of her day. She attended the ordinary schools and the Academy at Tilton, New Hampshire, besides receiving special instruction from tutors. She read extensively from good literature. Much of the poetry and prose which she wrote was published.

Even as a little child, Mary showed exceptional interest in religious matters. Her spiritual growth was aided greatly by her devout and intelligent mother and the Congregational ministers of Bow and Tilton. From the time she was twelve until her first marriage she "exhibited a most remarkable comprehension."[2] Her first instantaneous healing came to her when she was twelve years old. She was very ill with a fever. Her mother had suggested that she pray to God. She did so and

"a soft glow of ineffable joy"[3] came over her. The fever was gone. She arose and dressed herself in a normal condition of health.

Mary Baker took the marriage vows three times. In 1843 she was married to Major George W. Glover who was a contractor and builder. Six months later he passed away leaving a young widow who was soon expecting to become a mother. Her little son, the only child she bore, was named after its father. In 1853 Mrs. Glover was married to Dr. Daniel Patterson, a dentist, who deserted her ten years later. She obtained a divorce from him in 1873. Her last marriage occurred in 1877 to Asa Gilbert Eddy. He was an ardent Christian Scientist. His death took place in 1882 at Lynn, Massachusetts.

While Mrs. Patterson was at Lynn in 1866, she fell one evening on an icy street. Immediately she was carried to a nearby residence. Here her severe injury was tended by a physician. She was cared for during that night and removed to her home the next in a critical condition. On the third day, having received almost no relief, she asked for her Bible. Turning to Matthew 9:2, she read, "And behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.'" Again she was instantaneously healed. As a direct result of this experience, Mrs. Patterson discovered Christian Science. This discovery had been preceded

by years of seeking and prayerful desire to know the secret of Christ's healings. It was followed by years of clarification, testing, proving and stating the new-found principle. Mrs. Eddy tried every means of physical healing known to her. Being repeatedly unsuccessful, she was driven finally to a purely spiritual healing which brought to her the "light" she had so long been seeking.

Mrs. Eddy was a keen thinker and a lucid writer. All her books and pamphlets after 1866 were written in the interest of Christian Science. Space will permit only a list of the titles and the years of publication.

The Science of Man (a pamphlet)---------1870
Science and Health with Key to
the Scriptures (finally revised
in 1907)----------1875
The People's Idea of God----------1886
Christian Healing----------1886
Unity of Good----------1891
Rudimental Divine Science----------1891
Retrospection and Introspection---------1891
No and Yes----------1891
Church Manual----------1895-1910
Miscellaneous Writings----------1896
Christ and Christmas----------1897
Christian Science versus Pantheism------1898
Pulpit and Press----------1[illegible]
Messages to the Mother Church----------1900-1902
The First Church of Christ, Scientist,
and Miscellany----------1913

Mrs. Eddy organized the Christian Science Association in 1876. In 1879 this merged into the Church of Christ, Scientist. With a small group around her, she organized in 1892 the Christian Science mother church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, at

Boston, Massachusetts. In the same year, she founded the Christian Science Publishing Society as an agency of her church. The Christian Science Journal was founded by Mrs. Eddy in 1879. This monthly magazine she edited for eleven years. Two years later she started the Publishing Society for all Christian Science books and periodicals. In 1894 she founded the Christian Science Sentinel, a weekly. When she was eighty-seven years of age, in 1908, Mrs Eddy established the Christian Science Monitor, "a successful daily newspaper, giving news of importance but free from sensational and scandalous news."

In 1882 Mrs. Eddy moved from Lynn, Massachusetts, to Boston. Here were spent some of her most active and productive years. In 1889 she took up her residence in rather a secluded spot at Pleasant View, near Concord. The last two years of her life were spent at Chestnut Hill, near Boston. During all these years she initiated and either directed or supervised every important activity of her church. Before her death, she formulated a plan which fixed for all time the conduct of affairs of the church. These are to be found in the Church Manual. She passed away peacefully December 3, 1910.

2. The First Church of Christ, Scientist

An historical sketch of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, at Boston is to be found in the Church Manual written by Mrs. Eddy, herself. The following excerpts can be found on

Pages 17-19

"In the spring of 1879, a little band of earnest seekers after Truth went into deliberations over forming a church without creeds, to be called the 'Church of Christ, Scientist'. They were members of evangelical churches, and students of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy in Christian Science, and were know as 'Christian Scientists'.

At a meeting of the Christian Scientist Association, April 13, 1879, on motion of Mrs. Eddy, it was voted,--To organize a church designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.

Mrs. Eddy was appointed on the committee to draft the Tenets of The Mother Church--the chief corner-stone whereof is, that Christian Science, as taught and demonstrated by our Master, casts out error, heals the sick, and restores the lost Israel; for 'the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner'.

The charter for the Church was obtained June, 1879, and the same month the members, twenty-six in number, extended a call to Mary Baker Eddy to become their pastor. She accepted the call, and was ordained A.D. 1881. Although walking through deep waters, the little Church went steadily on, increasing in numbers, and at every epoch saying, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us'.

On the twenty-third day of September, 1892, at the request of Rev. Mary Baker Eddy, twelve of her students and Church members met and reorganized, under her jurisdiction, the Christian Science Church, and named it, The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

At this meeting twenty others of Mrs. Eddy's students and members of her former Church were elected members of this church,---The Church Tenets, Rules, and By-Laws, as prepared by Mrs. Eddy, were adopted---

The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, is designed to be built on the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death; thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant.

3. Spread of Christian Science

The spread of Christian Science from 1892 to 1929 is shown herein:

> "At the end of 1929, however the entire number of Christian Science Churches and Societies is 2,419, of which 2,019 are in the United States, 199 in Great Britain and Ireland, 66 in Canada, 41 in Germany, 14 in Switzerland, 18 in South Africa, 18 in Australia, 11 in New Zealand, and 33 in other Countries. At the same time, the number of practitioners listed in the Christian Science Journal is 9,925, of which 8,609 are in the United States, 651 in Great Britain and Ireland, 204 in Canada, 92 in Germany, 36 in Switzerland, 38 in South Africa, 88 in Australia, 13 in New Zealand, and 194 in other countries."[5]

B. The Underlying Philosophy

The underlying philosophy of Christian Science is found expressed in the Tenets[6] of the church and the "Scientific Statement of Being"[7] as written by Mary Baker Eddy. These are quoted below, the Tenets first:

1. "As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life.

2. We acknowledge and adore one supreme and infinite God. We acknowledge His Son, one Christ; the Holy Ghost or divine Comforter; and man in God's image and likeness.

3. We acknowledge God's forgiveness of sin in the destruction of sin and the spiritual understanding that casts out evil as unreal. But the belief in sin is punished so long as the belief lasts.

4. We acknowledge Jesus' atonement as the evidence of divine, efficacious Love, unfolding man's unity with God through Christ Jesus the Way-shower; and we acknowledge that man is saved through Christ, through Truth, Life and Love as demonstrated by the Galilean Prophet in healing the sick and overcoming sin and death.

5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter.

6. And we solemnly promise to watch, and pray for that mind to be in us which was also in Christ Jesus; to do unto others as we would have them do unto us; and to be merciful, just, and pure."

The "scientific statement of being" which clearly sets forth the fundamental assumptions of Christian Science is:

"There is no life, truth, intelligence, nor substance in matter. All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is all-in-all. Spirit is immortal Truth; matter is the unreal and temporal. Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore man is not material; he is spiritual."

C. The Religious Education Program

1. The Sunday School

A very important department of the religious education program is the Sunday School. Its organization is set forth in the Church By-Laws, Article XXV. The following is quoted therefrom:

"The Sunday School. Section 1. Pupils may be received in the Sunday School classes of any Church of Christ, Scientist, up to the age of twenty years, and by transfer from another Church of Christ, Scientist, up to that age, but no pupil shall remain in the Sunday School of any Church of Christ, Scientist, after reaching the age of twenty. None except the officers, teachers, and pupils should attend the Sunday School exercises.

Teaching the Children. Section 2. The Sabbath School children shall be taught the Scriptures, and they shall be instructed according to their understanding or ability to grasp the simpler meanings of the divine Principle that they are taught.

Subject for Lessons. Section 3. The first lessons of the children should be the Ten Commandments (Exodus, 20:3-17), the Lord's Prayer (Matthew, 6:9-13), and its Spiritual Interpretation by Mary Baker Eddy, Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:3-12). The next lessons consist of such questions and answers as are

adapted to a juvenile class, and may be found in the Christian Science Quarterly Lessons, read in Church services. The instruction given by the children's teachers must not deviate from the absolute Christian Science contained in their textbook."

Order of exercises[9] for the Sunday School of the Mother Church and Branch Churches:

"1. Call to order by the Superintendent.
2. Hymn.
3. Subject of the lesson announced; Golden Text repeated by the children; Responsive Reading.
4. Silent prayer, followed by the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer in unison.
5. Instruction in classes, in accordance with Sections 2 and 3 of Article XX of the Manual of the Mother Church.
6. Entire School reassembles.
7. Hymn.
8. Scientific Statement of Being read by the Superintendent.
9. School dismissed.

If a collection is taken, it should be taken in the classes before they reassemble.

2. Young People's Societies

Since the Religious Education program of the Christian Science movement makes no provision for any meeting except the Sunday School from 10-12 A.M. on Sundays, there are no Young People's Societies in the church itself. But in connection with some educational institutions of higher learning (e. g. the University of California) there are Christian Science Societies for the Christian Science students of the university. Those interested are also welcomed. These societies are under the control of the Church Manual. Often, each society has a building of its own. In this may be found a Reading Room which is open

daily for the students; a large assembly room where testimonial meetings are held one evening each week; several smaller rooms to accommodate smaller groups which meet in official capacities ect. These student centers are established to meet the spiritual needs of the students. There are no activities in Christian Science churches or student centers which have as a primary purpose the meeting of the social or intellectual needs of the individual. The program which is fixed by the Church Manual does not permit any social or educational meetings within the buildings. Hence the young people come to the church only Sunday from 11-12 A.M. and 8-9 P.M. for the regular church services (which are identical on Sunday) and Wednesday evening from 8-9 for the regular testimonial meeting. Until they are twenty, they may attend the Sunday School from 10-11 A.M. on Sunday. Besides these, there are a very few special services held annually in each church. At the student centers, only one meeting is held regularly each week. Usually there is given once each semester a Christian Science lecture which is confined to making clear the fundamental aspects of Christian Science. After these the students sometimes have a discussion. Since every Christian Science church and society has at least one public lecture each year, and since there is seldom a duplication of lectures within the same community, it is possible for the student to hear several of these lectures every year. The speakers are specially chosen for this work and their lectures

are approved by the Christian Science Board of Lectureship before they are given. Only previously approved material can be presented. Hence the lecturer may answer no questions from the platform at the close of the meeting.

The leaders at the student center meet together on call. Since each center is under the control of the Church Manual, most of its necessary rules are already fixed. There might be a few local problems which need solving however. The Superintendent of the Sunday School has the authority to call any necessary meeting of his staff. These are held for business purposes only. They are seldom needed.

D. The Critical Appraisal

Before presenting my critical appraisal of Christian Science, I should like to clarify several attitudes of mine toward this movement. It seems to me that Mary Baker Eddy has re-discovered a powerful spiritual truth which is essentially Christian. In order to present this Truth to humanity in the most efficient way, she has adopted certain educational methods. In many respects these are in direct opposition to our modern educational practice. But there are certain underlying principles which it might be well for liberal Christian education to emulate. These principles I shall emphasize, as well as state the methods Mrs. Eddy has built upon them.

In regard to the adoption of these methods by liberal Christian education, I would suggest that we should not expect

to gain spiritual experience by the use of certain methods alone. Spiritual experience is a gift of God. Methods are human inventions. Let us put spiritual experience first, then, and gradually we shall be able to evolve certain methods which will foster the growth of that religious experience. Hence we see that each of the movements discussed has developed its own methods to be used in promoting the type of spiritual experience desired. All three movements have certain elements of their spiritual experience in common. But each has its distinctive characteristics which result in different methods. Each method has a strong appeal for a definite group of people; within them all, the followers find the essence of Christianity. To the on-lookers their differences may be much more conspicuous than their similarities. Of course, the followers often feel that there is only one "true way" and they have found it. The differences are of great importance to most of them.

Then how are we going to utilize these methods which they have worked out? Of course, we do not want to accept any one method as it is. We differ from each of these movements in certain fundamental assumptions. Hence our methods would not usually be the same. But we can survey all their methods that have any possible contribution to our use according to our spiritual experience. Many of their methods can be added to our list of "possible methods." Some of them may seem to be opposites, but each might be able to meet a certain need of ours.

1. Possible Contributions

The possible contributions which Christian Science has to make to liberal Christian education lie in three fields: technique, educational theory and spiritual emphases. Each of these will be discussed.

(1) In Technique

In the Christian Science Sunday Schools classes are usually kept small in numbers. Each teacher will have from four to eight students under ordinary conditions. The needs of the children will determine the number in each class. Small groups aid greatly in the type of class-work carried on.

An underlying principle in the Christian Science Sunday School is simplicity. This reveals itself in the use of only those material aids which assist the child in his spiritual understanding. This prevents the material aid from ever becoming an end in itself. The method of procedure in the class room is a very simple one. It centers around God and the child and their relations, to one another. The conversational method aids greatly as the teacher and students share their demonstrations of Christian Science of the past week. They discuss the new lesson seeking to find how it can help them throughout the coming week. In organization, simplicity again

reigns. There seems to be no need for any social or educational activities which aid in increasing attendance and financial support. The Christian Scientists believe that if God is put first, attendance and material needs will take care of themselves. This they seem to do in their churches. We might well ask the reason for all this simplicity in the Christian Science religious education program. To me, it seems to be this. Christian Science stresses the reality of the spiritual aids. Hence, the simpler the organization and material equipment of the religious education department are, the more spiritually vital it is liable to be. Beyond a certain point, this is not true. Liberal Christian education needs greatly this simplicity in all its departments but this must come naturally as a result of the primacy of spiritual experience. If we put God first, the material and organizational needs will take their proper place.

Mary Baker Eddy has stated in the Church Manual that "none except the officers, teachers, and pupils should attend the Sunday School exercises."[10] This eliminates all distractions that might result from visitors at any time during the Sunday School. Hence, this hour is kept for his spiritual development only, as he worships, testifies and shares with his fellow-classmates and teacher. At no time does he ever participate in that which should attract visitors. Christmas and Easter are recognized in no special way. These are held as

purely spiritual occasions and should be observed in the usual spiritual manner.

Quoting again from Mary Baker Eddy, we learn that "The instruction given by the children's teachers must not deviate from the absolute Christian Science contained in their textbook."[11] Thus the teacher must not only understand but must be able to demonstrate the teachings of absolute Christian Science. Doubtless, he is usually a member of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston. He must be able to reveal Christ's love to his pupils so that they will learn to reflect that love. He must be able to lead these plastic souls along the spiritual paths he has trod, helping them to become more and more independent in demonstrating the truths they are learning.

(2) In Educational Theory

In educational theory Christian Science has possible contributions to make to us. Throughout this discussion, I have stressed the spiritual element of religious education in contrast to the secular approach.

The Christian Science movement has set up its objectives or standards from a spiritual rather than a naturalistic point of view. The usual educational method has been abandoned as limiting the individual. The child is recognized as a spiritual creation. If his spiritual needs can be met, the naturalistic needs are satisfied at the same time. So, the child is

expected to react as a perfect spiritual child of God. He yearns to be silent and listen to God speak to him. He likes to learn what God has written for him and to join in singing songs of praise. He brings his collection to Sunday School because he is grateful to God for what He has done for him. He does not need any material helps to hold his attention and interest. Talking to, with and about God is all he needs to keep him fascinated spiritually and quiet physically for the hour of Sunday School. The teacher accepts these standards for his pupils. The children are taught them and are expected to live up to them. Of course, it takes several weeks and sometimes several months before the pre-school child learns to control his little body. But, he does learn, and soon is able to sit still and listen and talk as do the older children. There is a peace a serenity and a quiet enthusiasm in a Christian Science Sunday School which reveals that the children are spiritually happy and satisfied. There are no discipline problems in the Sunday School. A spirit of reverence in God's house is expected of the children and, somehow, they take it for granted, and feel it, down to the youngest.

In the Christian Science Sunday School, the lesson material to be taken into the class room is limited. The reason why this is done is to prevent unworthy literature reaching the attention of the children. Also there is more time to be spent in reading and understanding the Bible which is a proud

possession of almost every Christian Science child.

Every precaution is taken to keep the attention of the children unhindered. The actual rooms themselves are colorful, artistic and simply decorated. Pictures and other material attractions are seldom used as they are liable to draw the attention to the material. The opening and closing exercises are always uniform in procedure so that the unusual does not occur, detracting the attention from the spiritual. No visitors are permitted to any part of the services. Thus the Christian Scientist tries to prevent the material from hindering attention to the spiritual by removing it as far as possible. He feels that the material is not needed for true worship. Surely liberal Christian education needs to eliminate much of the material that has become an end in itself thus shutting the child off from God.

The child in the class-session is encouraged to tell how he has demonstrated the truths of Christian Science during the past week. Perhaps he has read his lesson or had someone read it to him each day. This includes readings from the Bible and "Science and Health." He has learned his Memory Text and tried to understand the truth that was in it. Since all other Christian Scientists had the same lesson during the past week, he has been able to talk to others about it. He has tried to find the new truths in the lesson and to use them in his every day life. On Sunday he tells how he succeeded. The others do

it. The teacher tells of his experiences. So all soon feel free and expected to take a part. This reveals to the teacher how the children are growing in Christian Science. The children find encouragement by the experience of some child who has progressed farther.

The child is encouraged to listen to God as well as talk to Him. He is taught that all his inspiration comes from God and therefore, if he wants to grow, he must listen. The Lord's Prayer is often repeated slowly and sincerely in unison. This is taught to every child when he first enters the Sunday School. Every child memorizes certain Bible passages. He is taught the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer as the first step in his religious experience. He is expected to learn the Memory Text every Sunday. This is done by many.

Children above the Primary Department are encouraged to attend the regular morning church services. Here the same lesson they have studied during the week is read. When a child has reached twelve years of age, he is eligible for church membership if he has fulfilled all other requirements. The same standards as those of the adults must be met by him. Since membership stresses spiritual growth and demonstration, the child is not handicapped by his age. Wherever possible, two Sunday School sessions are held. All children over Primary age are present from 10-11 A.M. so that they may attend

church services afterwards if they so desire. All the younger children come with their parents to Church and attend a Sunday School session which is especially for them from 11-12 A. M. They use the same rooms as the previous group.

When a student has reached the age of 20, he is expected to attend the Sunday Church service and the Wednesday evening testimonial meeting. Since the regular Sunday School lesson covers much the same material, he is no longer considered to need the Sunday School training. This throws the young person, twenty or over, out upon his own, spiritually. He must depend upon himself and his own demonstrations. Of course, practitioners are always ready to help him if he calls them. He must learn to fellowship with adults and to lean spiritually directly upon God. This indeed is a good test of what the student has learned in Sunday School. It is well, perhaps, that he be forced to study it out all by himself. Surely, these young people do not drop away from the church. The large society at the University of California reveals that fact. Instead, this independence seems to bring a poise and reverence not known before. Youth, spiritually trained, is ready and anxious to accept its full responsibility.

Surely there are many advantages in having the Sunday School Exercises always follow the same program. This has been proven by the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church. There is nothing unusual to detract the attention from the spiritual

theme. The children can take an active part spiritually in in the whole exercise. They can keep their thoughts on God rather than on what the leader might do or say next. They find it easy to keep their thoughts off of themselves. This type of service encourages true worship. It has proven very successful in the Christian Science Sunday School. But it is necessary for the child to want to worship God before he finds this type of exercise interesting and satifying. It has been proven in the Christian Science Sunday School that the children very soon learn to worship in these services and then they feel a growing need for them.

(3) In Spiritual Emphases

In spiritual emphases Christian Science has much to offer. "God is Love" could well be considered the slogan of the Christian Science movement. Love, a spiritual attribute of God, should be cultivated in the classroom in preference to the intellectual. Humans should constantly guard themselves against any except loving thoughts. All thoughts of love are God's thoughts. Only these should be permitted to enter the consciousness of mankind. Then sin would disappear and peace, joy, harmony, and Truth reign supreme. Perhaps humans can never expect to reach perfection in this material world, but the more one strives for the perfect mind, the more sin is realized as unreal and powerless over love. The true Christian

Scientist strives to live a life of absolute love as Christ lived it. He finds it necessary to keep constant guard over his thoughts at all times. He realizes that love-thoughts can overcome all lesser thoughts. As he begins to use this truth, he begins demonstrating its power to change his life. He is using his Christianity and hence he begins to spread it as people wonder what is making him more and more radiant. So Christian Scientists take Christianity quite seriously and strive daily to make progress by more and better demonstrations.

The truth of Christianity from the point of view of the Christian Scientist depends on whether it meets every need of mankind. This Christian Science has proven. By demonstration it has found that when man's spiritual needs have all been met, his physical, social and intellectual needs have also been satisfied. Healing of the body results directly from mental, spiritual healing. So Christian Scientists everywhere, from the youngest to the oldest, are ready to prove that Christianity is true by the demonstrations of its truth they are making daily in their lives. The Christian Scientist is expected to spend at least an hour a day in Bible study. From this he gains a clearer understanding of spiritual truths. He is taught to interpret the Scriptures spiritually rather than literally. He is encouraged to demonstrate in his daily life truths which he has found.

Christian Science teaches that persons should look at the

[illegible] spiritual sight [illegible] Science. There are certain stages by which one gains this sight. First, one can only hope. Then the spiritual eyes are opened and one knows the God is. By faith he accepts God's will for his life. But as the vision grows keener, faith gradually changes to understanding. The final stage, in which one sees quite clearly, is called "fruition." Every person should create the habit of seeing "good" wherever it is manifested. One is at all times surrounded by God's perfect creations which are spiritual. The mortal eye sees the unreal, the physical, which is not like God. Christians should train their spiritual eyes to recognize sin wherever it is, and, if necessary, to expose it. Thus the unreal is not confused with the real, God's perfect creation. Every individual should see his fellow-man as a perfect child of God and love him as such. The sin which prevents him from being like Christ should be recognized as unreal and therefore powerless over the real. Christians should abhor sin in all its forms. They should also abhor anything which might create in them a desire for the unreal. Hence Mrs. Eddy always opposed drinking and smoking for her followers since they usually created within the follower a desire to satisfy a mortal craving.

God is constantly revealing himself more and more to his

creations. As one's spiritual sight grows, the more and more one is aware of God as the only reality in the world. Christian Science points out that true sacrifice is the sacrifice of every un-Godlike thought. So Christ-likeness is reached by the process of thought purification. Thoughts do seem like such little things and yet they are, indeed, the key to the Kingdom of God. We are determined by the thoughts we think. The Christian Scientist encourages us to guard our every thought.

Healing is stressed as the proof of the Truth of Christianity as it is interpreted by Christian Science. Healing of the body and mind come as a direct result of the healing of the spirit. Where there is faith, there is often healing; where there is understanding, there is always healing. But there are those who seek healing who have neither the faith nor understanding to receive it.

2. Adapting These Contributions to Liberal Christian Education

Now we are ready to attack the problem of adapting these possible contributions to liberal Christian education. Let us turn now to the field of technique. First, I would accept the suggestion of making a vital Christian out of every teacher (The way in which I believe this can be done will be discussed in the conclusion of this thesis. But my suggestion is only one among several. It is vital Christian teachers which we want. The definite technique by which they attain this Christ-

ian vitality is not so very important.). When the children in Sunday School will start catching some of that spiritual vitality. When Christianity begins to spread; discipline problems disappear, interest grows, reverence for God becomes a reality and the desire for worship takes the place of the desire to be entertained by a leader or one another. When material helps lessen in importance, the Bible is enthusiastically studied, God, and not the individual child, is the center of attention. Inducements for attendance and larger collections will no longer be needed. The children will come to Sunday School for spiritual adventure and not to have a good time socially. When the children have become spiritually alive, then the organization can be made much simpler. Organization is often a substitute for spirituality and becomes more complex as spirituality lessens. When organization is no longer needed to gain the interest of the child, then it becomes a humble tool which spirituality uses but little.

When the class becomes a group of spiritual adventurers, and each child shares his religious experiences and problems, then the classes need to be small and absolutely private. Each class becomes a veritable spiritual family. This is a period of real spiritual growth for each member. It is a most intimate relationship.

In educational theory, Christian Scientists have much to offer. In the first place, I feel that their standards or

objectives are more spiritual than ours. They assume their children to be perfect spiritual creations of God and therefore capable of obeying Gods laws which are higher than man's laws. They believe that the attention span of God's child should not be limited by his body. Hence[12] the little one in the Christian Science Sunday School learns to sit quietly for about forty-five minutes listening to and taking part in the class discussion. He is soon able to control his body and loses his desire for physical activity while at Sunday School. The teacher's responsibility is to explain God's law of self - control to the child. An average child readily understands. Herein lies no problem of human law or punishment for improper conduct. The child gladly obeys God's law. The teacher does not need to make one.

In our religious education work I believe we limit our children by our human laws based on psychological experiment. We test out a large group of youngsters, and set the standard as that of the average. Then we say that we should not expect a child of six to sit still more than twenty minutes. The body must have activity. It is natural that it should. Therein we are letting the physical law rule, the child and we feel that that is necessary since he is a physical being. But Christian Science has proven that if we place spiritual laws first, the physical demands lose power, and gradually the child is emancipated from many bodily limitations. Perhaps we need

to gain a clearer understanding of the contribution Christianity has to offer in this field. It should be distinctly higher than that made by our secular-education.

In our religious education program, I believe we should limit our source of materials only to the very best. The Bible should have the dominant place. Only the best hymns should be used. Quality rather than quantity should govern the selection of stories. A really vital story bears repetition. I think we too often permit the mediocre material to be used. Of course, the teachers must have a spiritual understanding of the Bible and its stories before they can make them live for their pupils. I would suggest that the child is much more interested in the spiritual truths of the Bible than in its sources, history and authenticity. The latter may be used as tools but all too often are substituted for the spiritual truths. Then Christianity becomes informational rather than inspirational and thereby loses its power to transform the lives of the children.

The sharing of religious experience and silent prayer both belong in our class-rooms. But these pre-suppose that the teacher and most of the class feel the need of them. They are not usually desired until God has become a reality for the group and Jesus Christ, their true Way-shower. Then the children yearn to listen to God's voice in silent prayer, and share how God has helped them to overcome their difficulties

during the past week.

Our children should have a worship service in which they truly worship God. By changing the adult church service somewhat, this might fill the need of the children of twelve and over. God must be very real to the children before they can commune with Him in the worship service. A child cannot be expected to truly worship God if he has never become personally acquainted with Him. In our liberal churches, I believe we should stress the child's relationship to God first. A vital worship service will result. Perhaps we are wasting time setting molds which serve as barriers between God and the child.

Conducting the Sunday School exercises for the children under the fourth grade during the time of the morning Church Service sounds like a very practical suggestion. This method surely would have its advantages if the Sunday School lacked class-rooms, teachers, pianists, equipment etc. to meet the needs of the whole Sunday School. The greatest draw-back as I see it would be denying all the adults retained with the children the privilege of going to church. But it would make it possible for the parents to [illegible] church.

A fixed program for the Opening and Closing Exercises would be advisable if we could hold the attention that way. When the spirit of the assembly is that of worship and everything that is done tends to turn all thoughts God-ward, then

a fixed program is best. In this way the children's attention is kept off of themselves, each other, the leader, and on God. Until our children learn to truly worship God in song, prayer and Bible reading, this type of program will perhaps be called "stale" and "too monotonous." We must teach our children to really worship God. This again goes back to our fundamental need, spiritually transformed teachers and children.

In order to critically appraise the contribution of these spiritual emphases to our liberal Christian Education, it will often be necessary for us to turn our gaze toward ourselves first. The spiritual emphases are excellent but so often our churches are not spiritually ready for them. We must be willing to face this fact and try to see how we can awaken our churches before we can adapt the spiritual emphases to our needs. Let us appraise what Christian Science has to offer.

"God is love" is, indeed, a worthy slogan for any Sunday School. But, in order that it may seem real to the children, it must be lived and radiated by the officers and teachers of the School. All too often we are liable to live and reflect to our students the slogan "God is intellect." But this will never help the children to find real solutions to their spiritual problems. Could we honestly ever admonish our pupils to guard themselves always against any except loving thoughts? Do we leaders do that ourselves? Are our critical thoughts usually loving? We must change our thoughts first before we

can be sincere with our children. "Thoughts of love can overcome all lesser thoughts." Have we proven this in our own lives? Then, we are ready to tell the pupils about it, that they might try it out in their lives. This is spiritual experience in the making--to live God's truths out in our lives. "Christianity is wholly spiritual." Do we really practice this, or do we just say it and act as if we believed that Christianity was mostly intellectual? "Emphasize the fundamentals and demonstrate them." What are the fundamentals which we stress? Are they the truths of God which can be demonstrated in the lives of the children? What have we done with the truth concerning spiritual healing? Why does it not result in physical healing for our students, also? Perhaps we have not faced this question ourselves. Why should we limit our use of Christianity? It surely should meet our every need. Does it?

"The Bible should be interpreted spiritually." Do we believe this? Then why do we spend so much time trying to explain its literal meaning? God can guide every individual into a spiritual understanding[13] of the Scriptures. Do we permit Him to do this, or do we try to explain them for ourselves, thus keeping them on an intellectual plane? "Bible study every day leads to a clearer understanding of spiritual truths." Have we, as leaders, found this to be true in our own lives? Has the Bible become the most "living" book ever written for us? Then, surely, we can convince our pupils of this

and the Bible will "come to life" for them, too. Teachers must be convinced by a truth before they can pass it on.

"Every Christian should create the habit of seeing 'good' wherever it is manifested." Do we really try to do this, or do we rather spend much of our time criticizing the evil which we see? Does the latter way really help our students to love everybody more? "Christians should abhor anything which creates in them the desire for the unreal." Have we ever stopped to consider smoking, drinking, evil thoughts, petty dishonesty, worldly pleasures, ect. from God's point of view? Can we clearly explain our stand on these matters to our pupils? Can we honestly say that we abhor everything which tends to make us less Christian? Our students are ready to follow us. "God is constantly revealing himself to man." Have we taught our pupils that God will reveal Himself to them if they will only seek to know Him? Has God revealed himself to us? How? Can we prove this to our pupils by the way God is working in our lives making us more Christ-like? "True sacrifice is the sacrifice of every un-Godlike thought." Have we realized this ourselves? Perhaps we have promised to sacrifice our lives for Christ. But are not our lives made up of our thoughts? Then should we not guard our every thought and sacrifice everyone which is not Godlike? We would soon realize the result of this in our own lives. Then we would be ready to tell our pupils about it. We cannot really convince them of

its truth until we have tried it and been convinced ourselves.

So we have appraised the possible contributions of Christian Science to liberal Christian Education. They are numerous. But we cannot expect to adapt many of them to our use until we have changed our Sunday Schools to a spiritual foundation. Perhaps it is necessary to begin with ourselves as the leaders of liberal Christian Education: Just what kind of spiritual lives are we living? Are we putting God first? Are we living God-controlled lives? Can those who meet us tell that by our radiant joy, peace and faith? If not, why not? We cannot hope to change liberal Christian Education until we ourselves have been transformed by the power of the living God. Have we? Do we know it? Are we ready to testify to it? Herein lies the secret to the power of our future Sunday Schools in our liberal churches.

Footnotes

[1] Smith, C. The Encyclopedia Brittanica, Fourteenth Edition Vol. 7, pp. 947 and 948.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Phelan New Handbook of all Denominations pp. 77-78.

[6] Eddy, M. Church Manual pp. 15-16.

[7] Eddy, M. Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures p. 468 l. 9-15.

[8] Eddy, M. Church Manual pp. 62-63.

[9] Ibid. p. 127.

[10] Ibid. p. 62

[11] Ibid. p. 63

[12] Owing to the fact that I was not permitted to visit the classes while they were in session, it is necessary for me to base my statements on the information given me by the assistant superintendent of the Sunday School.

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Chapter 2

PHYTOSOCIOLOGY

Chapter 2

PENTECOSTALISM

A. Brief History of the Movement

About forty years ago, Dr. Andrew Murray of South Africa wrote the book "The Key to the Missionary Problem" in which he pointed out that world evangelization would be possible if the power which God gave those disciples of the first century could be regained by the missionaries on the field. He urged that the twentieth century be ushered in with prayer for this power and a world wide revival.

In 1900, a Bible School at Topeka, Kansas, using the Bible as their only text-book, made a study of the subject of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit--the enduement of power from on high. The group spent much time in prayer. One of the students tells the story of her spiritual experience:

> "During the first day of 1901 the presence of the Lord was with us in a marked way. The spirit of prayer was upon us in the evening. It was nearly eleven o'clock on this first of January that it came into my heart to ask that hands might be laid upon me that I might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. It was as hands were laid upon my head that the Holy Spirit fell upon me and I began to speak in tongues, glorifying God. I talked several languages, and it was clearly manifest when a new dialect was spoken. I had the added joy and glory my heart longed for, and a depth of the presence of the Lord within that I never knew before. [1]
>
> On January second some of us went down to Topeka to a mission. As we worshipped the Lord, I offered prayer in English and then prayed in another language in tongues. A Bohemian who was present said I spoke his language and he understook what I said.---Since then others have understood other languages that I have spoken."[2]

Many students at the school received a similar experience.

Then it spread to those attending the revival meetings. Finally, this Pentecostal revival reached Los Angeles, California, where it received considerable publicity. Visiting ministers were Baptized with the Holy Ghost and returned to spread the new experience throughout the United States and Canada. These meetings were called "Pentecostal Revivals." A Methodist Episcopal minister took the message back to Norway. There the experience spread and soon "Pentecostal Revivals" were spreading into Sweden and Denmark. An Episcopal minister was responsible for its spread to Norway, England, Ireland, and Scotland. From there it soon went to other countries in Europe, India and China. Today there are Pentecostal ministers in every part of the world.[3]

Previous to 1923, Mrs. Aimee Semples MacPherson came to Los Angeles to help fan the Pentecostal flames into a veritable fire. At first she assisted others in "Pentecostal Meetings," but soon started some of her own. Under her leadership, the congregations grew so rapidly that plans were soon made for the building of Angelus Temple. Taking with her also the message of Divine Healing, Mrs. MacPherson held meetings up and down the coast winning followers by the hundreds. From its opening, January 1, 1923, Angelus Temple was not able to accommodate the crowds. In 1925 a training school was opened. Scores of young people came from all over the world to prepare themselves to be Evangels of the Four-Square Gospel. Today Foursquaredom stands as one of the miracles of the century. It has laid claim to

enthusiastic followers in every continent of the world. The estimated membership in 1934 was over 100,000. Approximately two hundred students are graduated annually from the training school--a two year intensive course of study and field work. This is the fastest growing and most powerful Pentecostal church in the world today. It is interesting to note that Mrs. MacPherson received her Baptism when a girl of seventeen at a little Canadian town where an Evangelist, Robert Semple, from Scotland, was holding "Pentecostal Revival." So we have seen the Pentecostal fire starting in the United States, spreading to Norway from which it was carried to Scotland. Mr. Semple brought it to Canada and from there Mrs. MacPherson has brought it to Los Angeles from which it has spread to every part of the world. And all this has come as the result of a religious experience received by a Bible student in Kansas on January 1, 1900. Pentecostalism is, indeed, a young movement.

B. Outstanding Doctrines

Pentecostalism is strictly Fundamentalistic in doctrine as far as Fundamentalism goes. In addition to the Fundamentalistic doctrines, Pentecostalism practices Divine Healing and teaches the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with speaking in tongues. The four outstanding doctrines of Pentecostalism are: conversion, Baptism of the Holy Ghost, Divine Healing, and the Second Coming of Christ. Let us discuss each of these separately. Every Pentecostal church emphasizes conversion as the initial religious experience

in the life of every member. This must be a very definite experience which can be fixed at a certain time and place. As a result, the member knows that Jesus Christ is his Saviour and Lord. Divine Healing is not only believed in but generally practiced in Pentecostal churches. Special services are given over to this ministry and all the physical ills of most of the members are healed in this way. The Bible reference they so often refer to in connection with this is James 5:14. The doctrine which distinguishes them from all other denominations is that of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with speaking in tongues. According to Acts 2:4, this took place in Bible days at Pentecost. From this comes the name of the movement which believes in repeating the experience which came to the one hundred and twenty on the Day of Pentecost. A doctrine which brings great joy to heart of every believer is that of the Second Coming of Christ, as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. This they expect to be very soon. Each one hopes it will be during his life time.

C. The Religious Education Program

Since Pentecostalism has split into so many differing groups, it is difficult to generalize as to the Religious Education program. The best thing to do, I believe, is to base my discussion on information I have obtained from visiting two Pentecostal Church Schools. These are in The Stone Church in Chicago and Angelus Temple in Los Angeles. The former has a

membership of about 225, while the latter has about 2,500 in attendance every Sunday. Angelus Temple has, doubtless, the largest Pentecostal Sunday School in the world. During this past summer I spent five weeks as a student at the Temple making a special study of the training school (Lighthouse of International Foursquare Evangelism) and the Religious Education department. It was not as large at that time as it is during regular school year, since those students were out in the field in active service.

1. Sunday Activities

In both Sunday Schools the organization was similar to that of any modern liberal church. The best educational methods seemed to be in use. There was an enthusiasm that was contagious. The children appeared happy, interested, and eager to take an active part. Both Sunday Schools were crowded to capacity and still more children arrived. When the time came for passing into class groups, I marvelled at the quiet order. Discipline is surely not a problem in these Sunday Schools. In the evening, before the regular church service, several groups of young people met. The largest group at Angelus Temple was called the "Crusaders." Its meeting was held from 5-6 P.M. The young people took entire charge of the service. They were radiant song leaders and dynamic speakers. A Crusader orchestra played the Offertory. This meeting always proved rather a strong

attraction for many visitors. After this service, a group of the Crusaders went out to hold street meetings. These were preceded by a half-hour prayer service. Only services of a purely religious nature are held at these churches so there was no social element found in any of these young people's meetings. The Crusader hospitality committee was always ready to shake hands and speak a word of welcome to every one who came in. This friendly feeling pervaded the whole atmosphere.

2. Other Activities

During the week, almost every Sunday School member returns for further activities. Never are there any of a purely social nature. There are Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl Meetings, choir and orchestra practices, radio broadcasting, religious dramatic groups preparing for special programs, band practices, prayer and testimony meetings, "tarrying" services, church services three times daily at Angelus Temple, special group meetings which gather to sew, cook, can fruit and vegetables fix toys, make bandages etc. for the less fortunate. These churches are usually like bee-hives with people always busy helping others. Angelus Temple is in use twenty-four hours of every day. The doors are never locked.

Leadership is taken rather seriously in these churches. Every leader has the primary aim of winning people to Christ. Conversion is not enough. Each teacher should receive his

Baptism with Fire before he stops seeking. There is a sincere assurance about a teacher who has received his spiritual baptism that can never be doubted by the children. Something has happened, spiritually, to that teacher and the child can tell it. So, teachers of the Pentecostal Church bring into their class-rooms a vital, contagious religious experience. They are convinced that God will completely heal all that have faith in His power. They are ready to show the students how to avail themselves of all that God has in store for them Naturally, it is not difficult for them to catch and hold attention. They make the Bible a thrilling story book for the student. Prayer is made the natural talking between a child and his Heavenly Father. Christianity is made a daily adventure with God. In this type of class, the exact method of teaching is of little importance. The teacher and students learn to talk and walk together with God. Is this not the ideal result for a Sunday School class? But these teachers are trained in better methods. They meet often for prayer and the making of plans together. They need to cooperate in putting on departmental programs.

D. The Critical Appraisal

Having taken a general view of the Pentecostal Sunday School in action, let us now turn to note the possible contributions it has to offer to liberal Christian Education.

(1) In Technique

Let us examine the field of technique first. Materials are kept as tools with which to illustrate a spiritual truth when that is necessary. Thus a blackboard and colored chalk aid the Superintendent as she tells the story of Jesus' return to the earth. Religious pictures aid the teacher in telling his story. Perhaps, for the little child a sand table is used for illustrative purposes. But I do not believe that the teachers ever permit the material aids to become ends in themselves. They are too eager to teach the children a new spiritual truth. Their greatest concern is the child's spiritual progress. So the children, down to the youngest, grow in spirituality by the use of pictures, crayolas, sand tables, dramatization, singing, and playing etc. In the Stone Church in Chicago I watched a group of little first graders as they learned the story of the healing of the man with palsy. The conversation centered around how God had healed them and members of their families. Divine Healing was a common possession among them. They accepted it as naturally as the "liberal" child accepts medical healing.

Music is a vital part of the Pentecostal Sunday School. The children love to sing. Simple choruses are usually memorized. They are learned from the leader. Song books are seldom used except among the young people who are more likely to understand the oft-used symbolism of the average Gospel song. The

words of the choruses are easy to understand and their meaning lie within the religious experience of the child. In other words, the child knows what he is singing, and sings it because he means it. There is great value in this. Memorized choruses go home with the child and sing themselves into his very soul throughout the week. He learns to love them, and the more he loves them, the better he can sing them. So it is usually conceded that children in Pentecostal Sunday Schools can really sing. I have heard these children softly sing from the depths of their very souls prayer choruses that must surely have touched the heart of God. What faith was revealed as they sang! No doubt God answers their prayers. That was beautiful, inspiring music, the like of which I have heard nowhere else. But it was the sweet, simple faith of the children that made the music beautiful.

The Bible is a proud possession of every member of the Sunday School. It is a necessity in every class room as soon as the child is old enough to read it. The Bible is read and studied during the class session. Many chapters and verses are are memorized. It is remarkable to me how much these children memorize and much of it they apparently understand. They are encouraged to read their Bibles at home until they become veritable friends to them. As the child grows in religious experience, his Bible grows in interest and value to him. It contains the stories of the thrilling spiritual adventures which lie ahead

of him.

Prayer plays an important part in the lives of these children. It seems absolutely natural for them. Their child-like faith is unbelievable. And God honors their prayers. Healings take place in their midst. Pagan "mamas" and "papas" are won to Christ through their united prayers. They are taught how to pray so that they will know that God will always answer their prayers. Then, whatever they ask for, they know they will receive. The thing they want the most seems to be to bring other little boys and girls to Christ. They want their relatives and friends made well and happy. They soon drop the selfish point of view as they see that others need many things much more than they do.

The dramatic method is used extensively in order to bring out the spiritual meaning of the story. Again the children take part so naturally. They do it for the sheer joy they get out of it. The older children like to put on religious plays for special programs. Often the musical efforts are combined with those in dramatics and the results are quite pleasing. An adult leader usually directs these adventures. But the children do the planning and help with the stage properties and costumes as well as the music and acting. I have seen rather elaborate productions put on at Angelus Temple that were indeed remarkable. And the children do not seem to lose the spiritual significance of it all.

The Pentecostal children are always ready to testify as to

their religious experience. Many of them have real conversion experiences when quite young. Most of the children are ready to testify as to healings of their own or in their families. The children have their testimony meetings much the same as the adults. They, too, are ready to glorify God for what He has done for them.

In the Sunday School class especially the pupils are accustomed to sharing their religious experiences with one another so that they can learn how to go deeper with God. They tell of their conversion experiences, their healings, how God is helping them in school, at home, among their friends. They share their religious problems and together try to gain an answer from God. A sharing Sunday School class becomes a very intimate fellowship in which the members pray for one another that God may meet their every need and use them in His service according to His will. Of course, the children often share their religious experiences with those whom they want to help spiritually. This is one of the best ways to win others to Christ.

In their worship services there are certain elements that I seldom find in ours. They seem to understand their songs better than we do. Sometimes the same chorus is repeated several times until the power of God seems to fill the whole room. That is true worship. When certain people give their testimony, they seem to be acting only as mouthpieces for God. At that time they are really one with Him.

(2) In Spiritual Emphases

The Pentecostal Church has certain contributions to make to us in the field of spiritual emphases. Every member of a Pentecostal Church must have had a definite conversion experience after which he knew that Jesus Christ had released him from all past sins, would forgive him for all sins in the future for which he had true repentance, would heal his body when sick, would answer his prayers when uttered in the Spirit, and would bring him the joy and peace he had always sought. At conversion the spiritually blind receives sight; the human will is surrendered to God's will, the self-centered pagan becomes a God-centered Christian. This experience needs to be brought back into liberal Religious Education to revitalize the ethical Christianity which is so prevalent there.

In Pentecostal Churches, one can usually see the following in letters over the platform: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Hebrew 13:8 This they truly believe and on it base the miracle working power of their church today. "God answers prayer" is taken for granted by all, from the youngest to the oldest, in Pentecostalism. They have an implicit, child-like faith which just doesn't doubt. And God seems to honor their complete dependence upon Him for every need, material as well as spiritual. The Golden Rule is being lived in Pentecostal Chruches. Their service to the less fortunate is remark-

able. It is a work in which the whole church plays a part. First they try to meet the physical needs of those who need help. Then they are ready to minister to their spiritual needs, whatever they might be. This stupendous work at Angelus Temple is carried out entirely through loving gifts of money, food, clothing, furniture etc of the many members and friends. Scores of people give hours of their time every week in the commissary into which the contributions pour and from which the supplies are sent forth to the needy homes.

Faith is the back-bone of Pentecostalism. By faith they accept God's promises to them. By faith they "know" that their every physical, social, and spiritual need will be met. They can tell almost unbelievable stories of how God has answered their prayers of faith. Through it all they are radiantly happy because they know that God has an abundant supply of everything.

Hundreds of evangelists are sent out annually with one mission "Preach the Word." This seems to be the secret ambition of every member, and, of course, each one can "Preach the Word" in the home, and at school and work, as well as in a tent or church. They "Preach the Word" by the way they live, the testimony they give to those interested, the service they do for others in the name of Christ. Their one aim is to take Christ to all who need Him.

"Be like Jesus" is one of the favorite children's choruses.

This they sincerely try to do every moment of the day. They seem to live conscious of what Jesus expects of them. In some cases the standards are higher than in others. But the more they walk with Him, the more like Him they become. He is one who changes those who walk life's road with Him.

2. Utilizing These Contributions in Liberal Christian Education

Briefly let us now see how we can utilize these contributions in liberal Christian Education. Let us look at the contributions in technique first. In our liberal Christian Education we need to always keep our material aids as tools to be used in the clarifying of spiritual truths. All too often they become ends in themselves in the hands of our teachers. The difficulty may be that the teacher doesn't realize the power of the spiritual truth. She is trying to point out so she cannot make it real to the children however hard she trys.

In the field of music, we need the enthusiasm, the spirituality, the understanding that the Pentecostal children find. We should be able to use our songs in worship as they do. Perhaps we need some of the simplicity of tunes and words that they have. Surely our children need to memorize more choruses so that they can live with them during the week. Then, too, it will be necessary for our pupils to have more spiritual experience before they can really appreciate even the simple words of the Pentecostal choruses. Our songs have beautiful music and words but

I often doubt their reality to the children.

We do emphatically need to emulate the Pentecostal Sunday School in its use of the Bible. I think our difficulty is that our children have no spiritual understanding of the Scriptures. It is no more to them than a high ethical code. We need to put our children into leadership the minute they are spiritually ready for it, but not before. We can't expect the child to give what he doesn't possess. This gives him a feeling of insincerity which he heartily dislikes. Let's meet his spiritual needs first and then give him an opportunity to help others in meeting theirs. We surely should make prayer much more real to our pupils. But, before this can be done, it must be very real to the teacher. The pupils usually reflect the teacher's faith in answered prayer. We have been using the dramatic method some time but do we always keep it as a tool in bringing out spiritual truths, or does it usually become an end in itself? I fear the latter is all too true. Perhaps a very spiritual director could solve this problem for us. Testimony really belongs in our churches but it went out with the conversion experience. Liberal Christian education greatly needs the reinstatement of both of these. Where there is conversion, there necessarily is testimony. If we bring back the former, the latter will come as a direct result. The sharing of religious experience belongs in the class-room, but we first have to have some religious experience to share. Conversion is usually the first vital religious experience in the

life of a Christian. After conversion the child has plenty to share. Let's bring the conversion experience back into our churches.

There are many moments of real worship in a Pentecostal worship service. These seem to be during individual prayer, the singing of certain choruses and testimony. The fundamental reason for this communion with God in group worship is the close spiritual relationship of the individual to God. Conversion is the experience by which we enter into this close spiritual relationship with God. There can be no true worship until one has found God as the most real thing in all life. We must bring the conversion experience back into our churches before we can hope to have real worship services.

We have much also to gain from the spiritual emphases which Pentecostalism is willing to contribute to us. The conversion experience is needed in our churches today. How we happened to lose it, I do not know. But we must gain it back somehow. The future success of our churches as Christian power stations depends upon it. We have lost it! We must not try to fool ourselves into thinking we still have one form of it. Let's be honest with ourselves, face the issue squarely, and then go out and bring it back where it really belongs. Divine healing is ready to take its rightful place in our churches if we are ready to receive it. That will mean complete consecration of our lives to Christ and faith enough to accept the healing. Are

our churches spiritually ready for Divine Healing?

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever," if accepted by our churches would transform them into centers of physical, intellectual and spiritual miracles. "God answers prayer." We talk much about it but have we proven it in our lives? We must live this truth or we cannot expect our pupils to accept it. The Golden Rule is practiced at Angelus Temple. Are we practicing it in our churches? In fact, are we living it in our own lives? Let us remember that when God comes into our lives, He takes our eyes off of ourselves and puts them on Himself and others. God manifests His power in our lives by the works He does through us. If there are no works, evidently God has been left out. Is that what has happened in our churches which are worrying about their mere existence, financially?

Faith makes the possessor rich in the gifts of God. We need it in our liberal churches today. Most of our possessions are a result of our worldly attainments, not a result of our faith in God. "Preach the Word" should be one aim of every Christian. How enthusiastic are we in spreading the Gospel message? Do we feel responsible for bringing others to Christ? Or do we merely invite them to Church? Maybe they won't find Him there. They would be much more intrigued if they could see Him at work in your life and mine? "Be like Jesus" could well be accepted as a Sunday School standard. But we leaders must be able to show Him to our pupils as a spiritual power in our

lives that is making us more like Himself each day.

In conclusion may I say that I believe that Pentecostalism's most important message to liberal Christian education today is, "Ye must be born again." There can be no Christianity without a definite conversion experience.[4] By this way, only, can we enter into true fellowship with God and our fellow-man. Can our liberal churches afford to dodge this issue any longer?

Footnotes

1/ Frodsham, S — The facts for this discussion have been taken from an article "Assemblies of God (Pentecostal)" found in "Religions and Philosophies in the United states of America" Compiled by J. Weber pp. 184-189.

2/ Ibid — pp.184-5

3/ The discussion mentioned in 1/ ends here.

4/ Not necessarily an instantaneous conversion but usually it would be.

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Chapter 3

THE OXFORD GROUP MOVEMENT

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A. Brief History of the Movement

1. Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman

The "First Century Christian Fellowship" which has been popularly labeled "The Oxford Group Movement" owes its beginning to a Lutheran minister, Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, who is now fifty-seven years of age. Born at Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Muhlenberg College which has recently conferred upon him an honorary D.D. His seminary training did not include for him any vital spiritual experience. Desirous of further training, he spent one year in study abroad. Returning to Philadelphia, he accepted a pastorate among the working people for three years, Leaving this, he founded the first Lutheran hospice and settlement house for poor boys. In 1908 he resigned from this work in protest against the trustees. Again he went abroad, this time to Keswick, England, to attend a religious convention. It was here that a turning point came in his spiritual life which was to lead soon to the founding of this modern religious movement. The grace of God became a purifying power in his life at that time. It resulted in the writing of six letters of apology to the trustees against whom he had harbored resentment for many months. That evening he shared with a pagan friend his spiritual experience, and witnessed a similar change wrought in the life of this young man.

From 1909-1915 Dr. Buchman worked among Y.M.C.A. boys at a large state university. Some of the outstanding campus characters were radically changed under his spiritual guidance. The next year he spent travelling in India, Korea and Japan with Sherwood Eddy. In 1916 he returned to act as extension lecturer at Hartford Theological Seminary. The following two years he spent again in the Orient. During this time some of the fundamental principles of the group were worked out. In 1918 the first Oxford Group house-party took place at Kuling, China. There were about one hundred Chinese and foreign Christians in attendance.

> "They were together for two weeks, talking about the deepest things in their own experiences, acknowledging frankly where life had been a failure, and seeking to find out whether it held more in store for them than they had already found."[1]

Two years later Dr. Buchman was at Cambridge University working among the students. In the summer of 1921 there was held a week-end house-party for men from both Oxford and Cambridge.

2. Spread of the Movement

Such was the small beginning in the Orient and Occident. Within the last fourteen years this movement has spread into fifty countries. It has united Christianity wherever it has gone. Pagans by the thousands have been challenged by this maximum way of life. South Africa has made progress toward a solution to many of her racial, economic and political problems through leaders who have accepted Christ's standards as

practical goals for life today. Just within the last year Norway has felt the power of this movement as it swept over the whole nation changing the lives of hundreds who, with the grace of God in their lives, are willing to sacrifice all in order to live as God would have them live. To those of us who are eagerly watching the spread of this movement, its growth seems miraculous. Only time can tell the real worth of the contribution it is making to Christianity.

B. The Underlying Principles

The "Oxford Group" is not an organization, or a new sect. It is a way of life as Christ showed us how to live it two thousand years ago. The principles are as old as the New Testament experiences and should be the normal and constant practice of Christians today as they were then. At the outset it is assumed that God has the power to change human lives and will regenerate the life of any person who is willing to accept these New Testament principles. It is further acknowledged that man must do his part before God can perform the miracle of redemption.

These principles have been the common possession of almost all infant religious movements, but as the decades have passed, dogmatism, ritualism, intellectualism, and humanism have gradually devitalized these principles until the church of today has well-nigh lost its spiritual power. The Oxford Group is intending to put this spiritual power back into the church. The

way this is to be done is simple enough to be followed by anyone, and yet challenging enough to catch the attention of the most learned.

The Oxford Group believes in God-guidance. By this it is meant that God is willing and able to guide any individual who so desires. God has a plan for every life and to carry out God's plan is to live the maximum way of life. In order to be guided by God, it is necessary to listen to God in prayer. In order to be able to hear and understand the "still, small voice," it is necessary to eliminate all barriers which might prevent God's voice reaching the suppliant. This entails Fearless Dealing with Sin, another principle. The Oxford Group grants the power of sin over human life. God alone can break this power but He can do it only when the individual is willing that it should be done. This does not usually occur until the person sees his clearly enough to hate them, and hates them sufficiently to repent for them, and repents for them deeply enough to forsake them. Then the power of God floods in and a peace is found which comes only from the release from past sins with which one has struggled almost unto death.

The Oxford Group has defined sin as "anything that separates one from God or from another person." What is sin for one person does not necessarily need to be sin for another. God will reveal to any person the sin that is in his life and when that sin is completely surrendered, will remove it. In order that

an individual might realize the sins in his life which make him unlike Christ, the Group has chosen as moral standards the four attributes which every Christ-disciple should constantly strive to attain. They appear in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. They are often called the "Four Absolutes:" Absolute Honesty, Absolute Unselfishness, Absolute Purity and Absolute Love. When a person has honestly and prayerfully matched his life with these four "Absolutes," he will readily see the power that sin has in his life and his great need for God's grace to break this power. An average individual cannot usually realize the multiplicity of sins in his own life without Sharing these sins down to their very roots with a "sharing" Christian. St. James has suggested: "Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be cured."[2] The Oxford Group has proven this to be a sure step toward God's redemptive power. No one need expect to have his life changed by the grace of God until he has been willing to follow the injunction of St. James. Modern psychology has emphasized the need of confession in order to relieve repression. After a person has experienced a spiritual change in his own life, he has an undying desire to tell others so that those he tells might seek and find a similar change. This form of sharing is called "witnessing" by the Oxford Group. It is done only under the guidance of God so that all seed will be cast upon fertile soil. The Groupers often say, "Where God guides, He provides," and they act as if they

literally believe it.

The next principle mentioned by Sherwood Sunderland Day in "The Principles of the Oxford Group" is The Necessity for Adequate Intelligent Expressional Activity. "There is no vital sustained experience of Jesus Christ where there is not adequate expressional activity."[3] Here the Group emphasizes that no vital spiritual experience can be expected to grow (or even be retained) unless the possessor shares it with someone else helping that person to have a similar experience. There must be propagation or there will be death. The Oxford Group believes in Stewardship of everything which the Christian possesses. The individual surrenders not only his entire will to God, but also his money, family, future plans, friends, time, possessions in worldly things, his talents etc. When these have been completely surrendered, they are returned to him to be used only under the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. This makes the Christian at all times available to God for the spread of His Kingdom here on earth.

The sixth principle is that of Team-Work. The Group discourages "lone-wolfing" Christians. Independence usually leads to possessiveness of a point of view rather than love for all those seeking the same goal. Christianity can best be spread by teams of fully surrendered disciples who are functioning as one unit, each presenting the "Good News" from his

own angle. In this way many are attracted who perhaps would not have been interested in only one of the group. The last principle mentioned by Sherwood Day is Loyalty. The highest loyalty in life is to Jesus Christ but there are lesser loyalties which God guides one to accept. In order to live up to life's supreme loyalty, one must be loyal to all those who are trying to live that loyalty. This brings about the unity above mentioned. All those who are serving Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit should be functioning as one body in Christ Jesus.

C. Religious Education Practice

1. Calvary Church, New York City

(1) Olive M. Jones

Olive M. Jones has revealed in her book "Inspired Children" how these principles are being carried out at Calvary Church in New York City in a Sunday School which has been literally revived under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. She, herself, has been an educational leader in the United States for the past two decades. In 1923 she was president of the National Educational Association. She has also been the president of the Academy of Public Education and of the Protestant Teachers Association.

> "She was the originator of special schools for day time preventive care and vocational training for truant and delinquent boys, and has lectured in New York University and many other institutions on delinquency, social education and teachers' problems."[4]

In February of 1927 Miss Jones began attending services at Calvary Church. Becoming intrigued by the quality of spirit-

uality found there, she sought a vital spiritual experience for herself. In May of the same year she affiliated herself with the Oxford Group Movement of which Samuel Shoemaker Jr., the rector of the church, was a member. In October 1928, having had over a year of spiritual growth, she accepted the non-remunerative position of Superintendent of the Sunday School. When she took it over, there were about forty children who came to a formal opening service and a disorderly class session. The children were seemingly gaining nothing that was spiritual. The teachers were ill-trained and only a few had had a personal experience of Christ.

Samuel Shoemaker describes this same Sunday School as it was in 1933 when the book was written.

> "Today the assembly is reverent, gladly attended because the service is understood, and the discipline is practically perfect--this last a direct result of the religious experience of the children. There is an enrollment of one hundred and forty with an average attendance of about one hundred. The teachers---are now a well-equipped, consecrated group of persons, whose chief aim in their classes is not the imparting of information about religion, but the living out with the children of their own religious experience, helping these little ones to be then and there in touch with the living Christ through study, through worship, and above all through listening prayer and guidance. It has been our discovery that, far from this message being too advanced for children, they take to it like ducks to water."[5]

Miss Jones and her staff did not work out a faultless curriculum which others might adapt to their Sunday Schools and get similar results. Instead, they tried to live so close

to God that He could guide them in every thought, word, and act so that through them He might become a living reality to every member of the Church School. At the outset, they admit that their success resulted from following the guidance of God and helping others to do likewise. They made themselves willing instruments of service to be used as God would have them used. Herein lies the secret of the success of this Church School. If we would like to get similar results, we must be willing to do likewise: put God, prayer, religious experience, and the Bible first. Calvary church not only talked about this, but actually succeeded in doing it.

(2) Religious Education at Work

Let us look more closely to see just exactly what is happening in Calvary Church School. The teachers and officers together formulate their curriculum as a result of God's guidance during Quiet Times. The plans are carried out as guided with smaller Quiet Times whenever doubt arises as to what should be done next. There is no rigidity as to time of meetings, but it is found that when God guides, harmony reigns. An interesting feature of this Sunday School is that every class has two teachers. This makes possible a much higher quality of work, and there is never any trouble in getting plenty of changed teachers. There are four realities which

every teacher attempts to make vital in the lives of her pupils. They are God, prayer, religious experience and the Bible. These are made realities in the lives of the children by the use of certain methods. Let us look at each one of these separately.

The class period usually opens with a period of silent prayer which is called a Quiet Time. The children not only talk to God but they listen to hear what he wants to say to them. Some of them have little note books in which they write down the thoughts which come to them. They call these their Guidance books. They are a great help in reminding the children later what God guided them to do. Obedience to God's guidance is an important matter. These little books help them to remember. The length of the Quiet Time varies according to the age of the child. The youngest children have about one or two minutes while the older groups sometimes are silent for as long as ten minutes. Sharing of guidance received follows the Quiet Time. Only that is shared which God has guided the child to share. No one is requested to share guidance. Sharing is of great value to the child who does it since it means bringing that which troubles him most out into the open so that it can be examined. It is suggested what he might do about it and usually the difficulty is all cleared up so that it no longer bothers him. The listeners to guidance

profit greatly by realizing how problems of others are solved. Then they have greater faith in facing their difficulties.

The Bible story follow. The primary aim of the teacher is to make the story live for the class. It should be expressed in words which the child understands. Illustrations and dramatization help greatly especially among the younger children. When possible the beautiful English of King Jame's Version should be used. In almost every story certain beautiful expressions can be utilized. This will aid the child in recognizing the story when he reads it later in the Bible. The child need not know that the story comes from the Bible. It is enough for him to love it sufficiently to ask for it over and over again. It must be so vivid that he can easily relive it in his imagination. The teller needn't worry about pointing out the moral. That will take care of itself if the child really loves the story.[6] The last part of the period is usually given over to memory work. The aim is to have the child learn the verses with the group understanding them as he goes. Miss Jones has presented rather a complete discussion as to exactly how this can be done. She has found a way to teach Bible verses so that the child retains them indefinitely.[7] The scripture becomes a part of the child's spiritual experience and as such will grow in meaning as the child grows spiritually. Miss Jones stresses quality and understand-

ing rather than quantity learned.

Holding true worship as a primary aim of religious education, Miss Jones and her staff have attempted to work out a worship service, under God's guidance, as rich in spiritual experience as are some of the class-room Quiet Times. She does not feel that they have yet reached the maximum in spirituality but she does assure us that there are no longer any discipline problems. The children have seemingly caught the spirit of worship, why they take a part in it and what they expect to gain from it. But, as to growth through their worship services, this cannot be determined. Yet, all will recognize that through worship, the children are making greater and greater adventures into the spiritual realities of life. This is being revealed in their lives as they become day by day more surrendered to God's will.

Quiet Times in the Sunday School often solve home discipline problems which the parents sometimes consider unsolvable. This usually means a contact with the teacher to see what she did. The mother hears the story of how God is guiding their class and He wants them all to do what is right. He tells them when they do wrong. They must see that the difficulty is corrected. God gives them the desire and strength to make the restitution, when necessary. This often leads the parents to the Oxford Group meetings held at the

church and eventually into changed lives so that they, too, live guided lives--all because of their little one who learned to talk with God at Sunday School.

2. Albany Community Methodist Church

The Oxford Group principles are being used in class-rooms in other churches. The one I know the most about is the Albany Community Methodist Church in Albany, California. Last spring a small Oxford Group Team was invited out to the Albany Church to witness at a Thursday evening prayer service. Several present were intriqued by the message. The result was that the minister and his wife and one of the Sunday School teachers were "changed." That has literally transformed that church. The conversion experience has been brought back to life as a necessity for every Christian. The four Sunday School classes taught by Oxford Group members have showed marked growth in spirituality as well as in numbers. The church services are dynamic and the sermons leave conviction behind them. Two of the members of the choir have been "changed." So has the Superintendent of the Sunday School. A harmony is felt that was never known before.

There are brighter days ahead for that church. Christianity is beginning to be lived as well as talked about there. People are beginning to be made conscious of the Four Absolutes

as worthy standards for every Christian. Members are now talking about their own religious experience rather than that of some dead saint. God's guidance is being sought by an ever increasing group. Eyes are being directed toward God rather than "money and numbers." These have been a great stumbling-block for this church. I have witnessed with my own eyes the truth of this statement: "If you want to 'Change' a church, 'change' the minister and his wife."

D. The Critical Appraisal

1. Possible Contributions

(1) In Spiritual Emphases

Let us now turn our attention to a critical appraisal of the possible contributions of the Oxford Group Movement to liberal Christian education. First, let us decide what the possible contributions are. Again, they fall into two groups: in spiritual emphases and in technique. The contributions in spiritual emphases are by far the most important. We shall consider them first.

The Oxford Group stresses the need in our churches for changed lives--lives completely transformed by a definite spiritual experience (conversion). This, indeed, is the starting point of every Christian life. The spiritual power of any church can be quickly judged by the number of permanently changed lives in its membership. Witnessing is the direct result of

a spiritual change. Others must be told about it. God must be glorified. Witnessing has two forms: confession and sharing. We confess, as God guides, the sins in our lives from which we want release. This confession is usually made to one who is also a confessor. Sharing or testifying is the privilege of every Christian after God has done something for him. It arouses the interest of those who would like to have similar experiences. It is the way in which many people are intrigued by the God-guided life until they accept it as the natural way of living.

The "Four Absolutes" are the moral standards by which all Christians should check their lives daily. If all Christians were as absolutely honest, unselfish, pure and loving as they knew how to be (God expects no more), what a dynamic Christian church we would have. Politics, business, international relations, our economic system would be suddenly transformed. The world chaos would begin to straighten out. And that is, if all Christians in the world honestly tried to live up to Christ standards every day of their lives. The Quiet Time should be a necessary part of the day's program for every Christian. It is most refreshing and beneficial if kept the first thing every morning, before the day's work must start. It is a time when we not only talk to God but we also listen for His voice. He will give us our guidance for the day. He will convict us of the sins which we should surrender and from which we should be

released. He will show us how we can best serve Him and our fellow-man throughout the day. He will give us the illuminating thoughts which will keep our hearts singing all day long. It is very valuable to keep a Guidance book in which is written down the thoughts which come to us during the Quiet Time. This not only serves as an excellent reminder but it also becomes a most fascinating spiritual diary which reveals one's spiritual growth.

"A sharing Christian is a propagating Christian." If every church member were winning others to Christ, our churches would be filled on Wednesday evenings for a testimony service as to God's power in our midst today. Surely, if sharing of religious experiences were brought back into the church, prayer meetings would be thronged. We surely need a Christianity that is worth sharing and some Christians who are very anxious to share it. Restitution is natural result of a conversion experience. God releases us from the sin but he usually requires us to do something in order to make it right with our fellow-man. It may mean an apology, return of stolen articles, confession of a lie or misrepresentation. After restitution is made, we are not liable to yield to that same temptation again. It is one of God's ways of helping us to spread the news about His reality in our lives.

Anyone whose life has been changed is ready to become a life-changer and lead someone else to Christ. This is the

greatest privilege that can come to any Christian. To watch a life pass from darkness into light under the power of God, is one of the most blessed experiences that can come to a disciple of Christ. This is the privilege of every vital Christian. What would happen to the average liberal church if every member suddenly became a life-changer? There would be no limit to the new members for that church. For years now it seems that the minister has been the only life-changer in the church. In some instances, even he has given up the task. Cold non-spiritual congregations have resulted. This will eventually mean death to the church. Let us set up a new goal for ourselves. Let us strive to have every Christian in the liberal church a life-changer.

(2) In Technique

In technique, the Oxford Group has little to offer because God does not always guide groups in the same way. Human planned technique often limits God. God directs according to the needs of the group in question. He is capable of working out with the group the plan which He wants it to have. It is true that often a certain plan is used by God in similar cases. But generalizations must not be made. A few of these suggested techniques which can be used under guidance might be mentioned. The steps in life-changing are given as: Confidence, confession, conviction, conversion and continuance. A good witness is us-

ually brief, sincere and, if natural, hilarious. An early morning Quiet Time is usually made up of guided Bible reading, prayer which contains adoration, confession, surrender, Thanksgiving, intercession, petition, direction from God, and illumination. It is often well to follow it by a period of sharing with another sharing Christian. It has been noted that Miss Jones worked out under guidance, a certain technique for class-room procedure at Calvary Church. But this does not mean that any class could use the same technique with equal success.

2. Utilizing These in Liberal Christian Education

My critical appraisal of these possible contributions to liberal Christian education will be necessarily brief. In this case, I have worked on the inside of this movement for a little over two years, and have used it in solving many spiritual problems in a Sunday School which is gradually being changed by the acceptance of Oxford Group principles. All I can say is, they have worked at Calvary Church in New York City, they are working in a smaller way in scores of other churches. Where they are being used, spiritually dead Sunday Schools are spring-into life. Children are fascinated by the way of life they offer. These principles can be used in any kind of a church anywhere. They present no creed, doctrine or theology, as such. They suggest a new way of life and show how it can be lived

n the world of today. It could be put into practice in very liberal church with dynamic results. It is the only way out for the liberal church of today in my opinion. Therefore, I should say to the church that is interested in the Oxford Group principles:

> "Take them all, and as you put them into practice, watch your church take on new spiritual life and soon become completely transformed by the power of God. Down through the centuries they have been in use by great religious leaders. They worked for them. They will work for you."

But to the church that is shy and feels that only certain of the principles can be of use in it, I should readily suggest:

> "Take all, or leave all.[8] This is a God-guided movement. God desires us to use all the principles. He wants our full allegiance or He can't use us. He has offered us a complete solution to our church problem of today. If you don't dare go all the way with Him, stay where you are. If you aren't willing to pay the full price, don't try to get it at reduced rates. God treats all churches alike. You must pay the full price. But it is surely worth it, ten times over."

The Oxford Group Movement is ready to come into your church and transform it into the kind of church God wants it to be. Are you ready to accept it?

Footnotes

1 Roots, J. An Apostle to Youth, p.13.

2 Moffatt Translation of the Bible James 5:16.

3 Day, S. The Principles of the Oxford Group, p.7.

4 Jones, O. Quoted from an article on the back of the paper cover of "Inspired Children" p.11.

5 Jones, O. Inspired Children, p.11.

6 Ibid. pp.165-178.

7 Ibid. The list of Bible stories for children can be found on pp.163 and 164.

8 The danger of adopting only certain Oxford Group principles is that usually those which would result in "changed" lives are not accepted. Hence, the principles adopted do not usually meet the fundamental need of the group, which all too often is a real conversion experience. This suggestion, I would say, applies especially to the liberal church.

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All the above Oxford Group Literature may be obtained from Calvary Church Book Stall, 61 Gramercy Park, New York City.

CONCLUSION

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A. Contributions Offered by All Three Movements

Thus we have briefly reviewed three of our modern religious movements, Christian Science, Pentecostalism and the Oxford Group Movement, as to their origin, growth, underlying principles, and possible contributions to liberal Christian education. I have tried to evaluate these contributions from the point of view of their usefulness to the liberal church. Perhaps it would be fitting, in conclusion, to summarize the contributions which are stressed by all three of these movements.

In each case the religious group clearly states its basic assumptions and working principles. Every interested individual is given a foundation on which to build and directions for building. Then he is encouraged to test out the plan as he progresses. When he finds that the foundation holds even under storm and the building stands under stress, he is ready to accept the assumptions and adopt the principles. It would be well, I believe, for our liberal churches to clearly define their basic assumptions and let their members know just where they stand. There is the danger of disintegration in too much freedom of choice. A religion which cannot be demonstrated in every day life loses its vitality and becomes a mere form.

All three movements stress the need for vital religious experience in every personal life. A Christian should know

the transforming power of a living God; the grace of God at work daily in his life; the peace and joy which comes through daily prayer and worship; the religious growth which results from testimony and helping others to gain a similar spiritual experience; the vitality which comes from accepting God's promises and living them; the faith and strength which follow explicit sharing, propagating Christian. Christianity spreads and churches grow in numbers as well as spiritual power when the members live the Christ-life.

Each of these movements stresses both the individual and social gospel but emphasizes the importance of putting the individual gospel first--a changed society will result from changed lives at work under God's guidance. Our liberal church today has somehow failed to spiritualize the social gospel. They have attempted to change society with the hope of changing the individual in the process. But this seemingly hasn't worked. We must include the spiritual transformation of the individual in our program. Christian social transformation will come through the God-guided individuals.

These three movements emphasize the importance of keeping material aids and methods always as tools--never letting them become ends in themselves. It is better to omit the material supplies than to let them become barriers between God and the

child. Worship services which meet the spiritual needs of the worshippers have been worked out by each group. Worship is stressed as communion with God in which the child and his God enter into spiritual harmony. This type of worship we need greatly in our liberal churches. Our children must feel a need for worship before any formal service can really help them.

Testimony meetings are held weekly by each group. They have proven very popular and beneficial as a source of spiritual power which comes from group prayer, testimony and Bible study. They serve as a good check on the religious growth of the witnesses who are encouraged to tell what God has done for them recently.

The Bible is the chief text book of each of these movements. It is studied daily as well as on Sundays. It becomes the mouthpiece through which God speaks to His people. It should be read prayerfully, expectantly, joyfully under the guidance of God who will reveal the truth found therein to those who earnestly seek it.

Christian Science, Pentecostalism and the Oxford Group Movement emphasize the great importance of living the Christ-life every moment. Works, as well as faith, are stressed. The individual who does not reveal Christ at work in his life cannot expect to attract the pagan. "God's best bill-boards are

the faces of His followers." Christians must reveal Christianity by what they are and do, rather than by what they say!

B. How Can We Spiritualize Our Churches?

Finally, "How can we spiritualize our churches?" Briefly, may I suggest a method which will answer our need? In the average liberal church we will want to start with the minister and his wife. We need to help them to see themselves as God sees them, and then have each of them share his sins with an "Oxford Grouper." After the complete surrender to Christ has been made the conversion experience will come to each of them. Their testimony will soon spread throughout the church and all who meet them will notice the change. Others will want the same experience. If God's guidance is carefully followed, the whole church is liable to wake up spiritually in a very short time.

As each "Changed" individual begins to live up to the "Four Absolutes," those working with him will realize their deficiencies. Usually that means that their lives will be "changed".

So we can visualize the church in which every member may become a life-changer. There is really no way of estimating the spiritual power of a congregation in which increasing numbers are striving to live maximum lives for Christ under

the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit. And this could happen to every liberal church today. But it must begin with you and me. I have tried it. God has completely changed my life. Does your church need to be spiritualized? Can you speak from personal experience just how it can be done? If not start with yourself. After you have been "changed", your church, friends and family will soon want to be "changed", too. True Christianity is contagious. Are people catching it from you?

End of

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